



Do I care if I get credit for my ideas? Status hierarchy and indirect influence

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Introduction

- In small-group settings, lower-status individuals are typically ignored, while higher-status individuals are attended to. As a result, the contributions of higher-status individuals have a direct impact on group decision making. Conversely, the contributions of lower-status individuals have little direct impact on decision making. When lower-status members do influence the group, they tend to have indirect influence that is not credited to them (Goodman, Alexander, Chizhik, Chizhik, & Eidelman, 2010). The purpose of the present project is to determine how it feels to have your idea reflected in a groups' final decision in the absence of receiving credit for your idea.
- We conducted an experiment in which under-classmen (lower-status) or upper-classmen (higher-status) participants imagined working with same or opposite-status students on a graded group assignment in which their contribution was used and credited to them (direct influence) or used and not credited to them (indirect influence).
- We initially hypothesized that having indirect influence will only be perceived as acceptable when one's group mates are of a higher status than oneself.

Methods

Participants

- $N = 291$ UWEC students (71% women)

Procedure

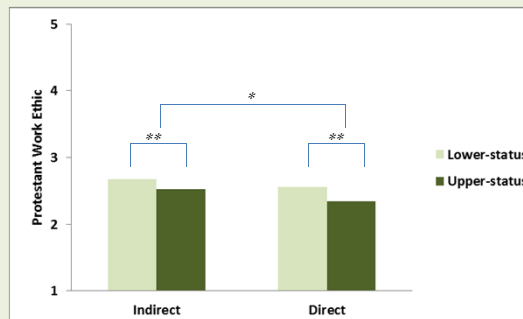
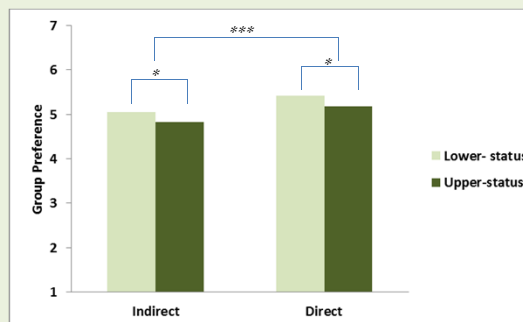
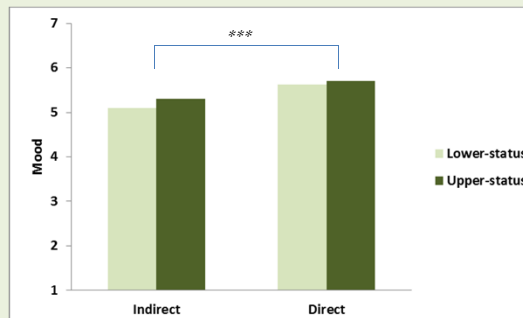
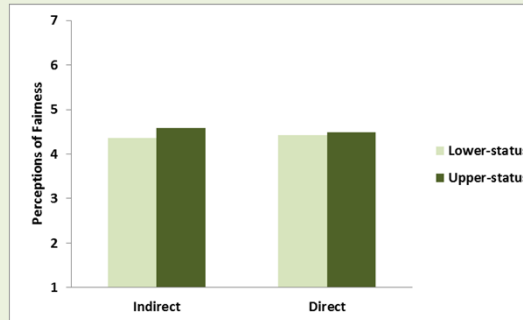
- Participants completed all materials through Qualtrics, were debriefed upon completion, and provided with evidence of participation

Independent Variables

- Participant's Status:** Lower-status (underclassmen) or higher-status (upperclassman)
- Group Partners' Status:** Lower-status (underclassmen) or higher-status (upperclassman)
- Type of Influence:** Indirect (group as a whole takes credit for participant's work) or direct (participant given credit for work) influence

Dependent Variables

- Perceived Impact of Contribution** (1 items, e.g., *I made the most important contribution to the group project*)
- Perceptions of Fairness** (3 items, $\alpha = .71$, e.g., *The amount of credit I received for my contribution was fair*)
- Mood** (4 items, $\alpha = .84$, e.g., *I feel happy with the final outcome of our group presentation*)
- Future Group Preference** (3 items, $\alpha = .51$, e.g., *If given a choice, I would work with my group members on another project*)
- Protestant Work Ethic** (4 items, $\alpha = .61$, e.g., *If people work hard, they almost always get what they want*)



Results and Discussion

Analysis Strategy

- Participants tended to (correctly) believe that they made the most important contribution to the group project, and this did not differ by condition, $\chi^2(2) = 1.38, p > .5$.
- There were no differences in any of the DVs as a function of group partners' status. As such, partners' status was omitted from further analyses. We proceeded by conducting 2 (Participant's Status: lower vs. upper) \times 2 (Type of Influence: indirect vs. direct) ANOVAs on each of our DVs.

Perceptions of Fairness

- Participants' perceptions of fairness did not differ as a function of participant's status or influence ($F_s < 1.8$).

Mood

- Participants who had a direct influence on group outcomes reported a significantly better mood than those that had an indirect influence, $F(1,285) = 13.71, p < .001$.

Future Group Preference

- Compared to participants who had an indirect influence, those who had a direct influence reported a higher preference for continuing to work with the group, $F(1,285) = 10.84, p < .001$. Lower-status participants, compared to upper-status participants, also reported a greater preference for continued group work, $F(1,285) = 4.50, p < .035$.

Protestant Work Ethic

- Compared to participants who had a direct influence, those who had an indirect influence more strongly endorsed the PWE, $F(1,284) = 4.03, p < .05$. Lower-status participants, compared to upper-status participants, also more strongly endorsed the PWE, $F(1,284) = 6.90, p < .009$.

Discussion

- Counter to our hypotheses, group partners' status did not effect participants' responses. In line with previous research, the type of influence that participants had resulted in differential mood, preferences for interacting with the group, and even their endorsement of the Protestant Work Ethic.
- Specifically, although those who had an indirect influence reported perceptions of fairness equal to those who had a direct influence, they reported worse mood, less interest in working with the same group in the future, but more strongly endorsed the belief that hard work pays off (or perhaps in this instance that work *should* pay off).
- It is possible that students do not perceive status differentials on the basis of school year status. We intend to conduct a subsequent study where own and partners' status are experimentally manipulated. We are also interested in determining why perceptions of fairness did not vary, while other outcomes did as predicted.

- Our findings may have practical implications for understanding students' experiences with group work.

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